



# 15 DAYS of

# Thankfulness

At this time of year, you can walk through a store and find the words “Thankful,” “Grateful,” or “Blessed” painted on half of all home décor, coffee mugs and tee shirts. November is the month when everyone remembers for a moment that they are, in fact, supposed to giving thanks for... something.

And rightly so! But what exactly are we giving thanks for?

And more importantly, who are we thanking?

Over the next 15 days, you’re going to be challenged to dig into three questions:

- What have I got to be thankful for?
- What is real thankfulness?
- Where do I show thankfulness in my life?

*(Spoiler—it’s not just in your words!)*



# DAY 1 *Thankful* for God's Providence

In today's world, there is a lot of negativity and despair being passed around. We as Christians need to rise above and be grateful in all things.

The question we are going to look at for the first five days is, "**What have I got to be thankful for?**"

## TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

"For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing" (Deuteronomy 2:7).

## TODAY'S THOUGHT

As we discuss thanksgiving, the first question we have to sort out is one that we've all secretly asked ourselves at some point: "What do I have to give thanks for?" We're going to spend the next five days putting that question to rest.

**First, we thank the Lord for His providence.**

Today's verse says that God blessed the Israelites in everything they did. God blessed them when they obeyed, and He also blessed them when they disobeyed.

How could He bless them when they disobeyed? He blessed them with chastisement. "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Hebrews 12:11).

When you come into a relationship with God, *everything* that happens is good. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose." Once you are saved, no matter what happens to you, you can write Romans 8:28 over it.

God mixes the events of our lives in the crucible of His care, and then sometimes He puts them in the oven of affliction. But when they come out, God has prepared something that will nourish and strengthen our souls.

God's children will sometimes have sorrows and problems. But how sweet to know that God turns every tear into a pearl, every hurt into a hallelujah, and every Calvary into an Easter! It's better to be an unhappy Christian than to be a so-called "happy" sinner.

And so we say, as we look at our lives, "Thank you, Lord, for your providence."

## TODAY'S ACTION POINT

Think back — have you recently chalked something up as a "coincidence"? There are no coincidences for God's people! Recognize now that it was really God's providence in your life, and give Him the thanks He deserves. Journal your thoughts.



## DAY 2 *Thankful* for God's Perception

### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

"As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we *are* dust" (Psalm 103:13-14).

### TODAY'S THOUGHT

Yesterday we discussed the first thing we have to thank God for: His providence.

**Second, we thank the Lord for His perception.**

Your God knows all there is to know about you. What a comfort!

God knows your worst. "O God, You know my foolishness..." (Psalm 69:5a). You can fool your pastor, you can fool your wife. But God knows. And the glorious thing is that *He still loves you*. God doesn't love us because we're valuable; we're valuable because God loves us. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

God also knows your best. "The Lord knows the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be forever" (Psalm 37:18). God knows your heart's intentions. And even if no one else does, God knows what you do to serve Him. Isn't it enough to know that you can't even give a cup of cold water in His name and lose your reward?

God knows your weakness. Psalm 103:14 reminds us, "He remembers that we are dust." God knows how weak you are. If you say, "This is more than I can bear," that is slander against God. Nothing comes to you without coming through Him. He gave you that burden to cause you to lean harder upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

God knows your needs. "Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:8b) David said, "I have been young, and *now* am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread" (Psalm 37:25). Thank God that He knows your needs. If God feeds the birds, how much more is He going to take care of you?

And so we pray, "Thank you, Father, for your perception."

### TODAY'S ACTION POINT

As you go about your day, watch for these three specific examples of God's perception:

If you help someone and get no thanks, thank God that *He* saw it, and will not forget.

If you get stressed, thank God that He sees more of the situation than you do, and will provide everything you need.

If you stumble over the same sin again, confess it and repent — then thank God that *He still loves you*.

At the end of the day, write down any of these ways that you were able to thank God today.



DAY 3 *Thankful*  
for  
God's Purpose

**TODAY'S SCRIPTURE**

"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love" (1 Peter 1:6-8a).

**TODAY'S THOUGHT**

We've discussed two things for which we ought to give God thanks: His providence and His perception.

**Third, we thank the Lord for His purpose.**

This world is a wilderness to every Christian, and it is God's plan that we walk through it — *not* that we somehow escape it. And how are you going to walk it? One step at a time.

"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" (Colossians 2:6). How did you receive Jesus? By faith. How do you live? By faith, one step at a time. Faith by faith by faith, we go. Being a Christian is like riding a bicycle — when you stop, you fall.

The wilderness is God's training ground. He's not ready to take us to Heaven yet...He has plans for us. "And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not" (Deuteronomy 8:2). God is leading us through a *wilderness* on purpose. God could just take you to Heaven the minute you get saved, but He wants to humble you, prove you, and strengthen you!

God doesn't want you to live in a smooth, easy place. You don't sharpen an ax on a pound of butter; you sharpen it on a grindstone. Why does God let you get hungry? So He can feed you. He wants you to have an appetite, and in the wilderness, you're going to get one. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

So thank the Lord for His purpose, leading you through this wilderness to make you mature.

**TODAY'S ACTION POINT**

Where is your "grindstone" right now? What desert is God leading you through? Take a look at your heart...are you just waiting for the hardship to end, or are you eager for God to use this to make you more like Christ? Journal your thoughts.



## DAY 4 *Thankful* for God's Patience

### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

"They refused to obey, and they were not mindful of Your wonders that You did among them. But they hardened their necks, and in their rebellion they appointed a leader to return to their bondage. But You are God, ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness, and did not forsake them" (Nehemiah 9:17).

### TODAY'S THOUGHT

We've named three things for which we owe God thanks: His providence, His perception, and His purpose.

#### **Fourth, we thank the Lord for His patience.**

For 40 years, God was with the people of Israel in the wilderness, and they were unfaithful, fickle, disobedient, carnal, and sinful. Yet He never stopped being with them.

Have you ever thanked God for His patience? Acts 13:18 says, "Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness." Israel had bad spiritual manners for 40 years, and God put up with it. Aren't you glad that God puts up with you?

Sometimes you might feel like God ought to blot you out. Have you ever confessed the same sin to God more than twice? But for *40 years* God put up with Israel's bad manners. Aren't you glad that He's a God of grace?

Peter once came to Jesus and said, "Jesus, there's this guy who keeps doing the same thing to me, and then he says, 'I'm sorry. Forgive me.' I forgave him once, and twice, and now it's the seventh time. How many times should my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Seven times?"

Jesus, with a twinkle in His eye, answered, "No, not seven, but seventy times seven!" (See Matthew 18:21-22.) It was His way of saying, "As many times as that stumbling brother asks you to forgive him, you are to forgive him."

If God requires that of us with one another, how much more will an infinite God of mercy forgive us when we come to *Him*? "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

We ought to join together in saying, "Thank you, Lord, for your patience."

### TODAY'S ACTION POINT

Is there a particular sin you feel you must have confessed a thousand times? Thank God that He forgives you repeatedly, and ask the Holy Spirit to uproot that sin from your heart.

Now — is there anyone in your life you'd like to quit trying to forgive? Erase those tally-marks in your head now, and forgive that person completely — just as you've been forgiven.



DAY 5 *Thankful*  
for  
God's Presence

**TODAY'S SCRIPTURE**

"You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11).

**TODAY'S THOUGHT**

We've determined that we owe God thanks for His providence, His perception, His purpose, and His patience.

**Fifth, we thank the Lord for His presence.**

For 40 years God was with the Israelites — in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. But today, He is with us in a more wonderful way: in the form of His blessed Holy Spirit. When you go to school, the Holy Spirit goes with you. When you go to work, the Holy Spirit goes with you. Wherever you go, God's Holy Spirit is with you.

**"For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'"** (Hebrews 13:5b). In the original Greek, this verse is written in an intensive form that literally says, "I will never, never, never leave you."

Have you ever thanked God for His presence? "These forty years the Lord your God *has been* with you; you have lacked nothing" (Deuteronomy 2:7), and He has promised never, never, never to leave you alone. You may be in a hospital bed going through some affliction or some suffering right now. But Jesus is in that room. Dear friend, He knows, He cares, He feels, He understands. He will never leave you alone.

So praise God today, and thank Him for His presence!

**TODAY'S ACTION POINT**

Hold an ongoing conversation with God today. "The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth" (Psalm 145:18). Because He is *present*, you may talk with Him every moment of the day. If you're suddenly anxious, tell Him. If you're not certain what to do, ask Him. If you're pleased about something, thank God for that blessing. Talk to your Lord as if your closest, most understanding friend were sitting next to you.

Because He is.



## DAY 6 *Real Thankfulness* is Proper

We began our study in thankfulness with a question — “What have I got to be thankful for?” And we’ve spent the last five days discovering five things that *every one* of God’s children ought to give thanks for: God’s providence, perception, purpose, patience, and presence.

Now, for the next five days, we turn to our second question: “What is real thankfulness?”

### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

“*It is good to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night*” (Psalm 92:1-2).

### TODAY'S THOUGHT

Real thankfulness is proper.

It is proper for us to give thanks, because it's God our Father that we're thanking. Ephesians 5:20 says we are to be “giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Anything good that you have has come from God. You didn't get it by luck, ingenuity, hard work, wit, or wisdom. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning” (James 1:17).

You might say, “I did that!” Where did you do it? On God's Earth. What did you do it with? The body He created. Who gave you that mind, that ambition? “What do you have that you did not receive?” (See 1 Corinthians 4:7.)

There's an old story about a boy who came home from the store. His father asked, “Son, where did you get that bread?”  
“From the grocer.”  
The father asked, “Where did the grocer get it?”  
“From the baker.”  
“Where did the baker get it?”  
“From flour.”  
“Where did he get the flour?”  
“From the miller.”  
“Where did the miller get the grain?”  
“From the farmer.”  
“Where did the farmer get it?”  
“Well,” the son said, “He got it from God.”  
So the father asked again, “Where did you get that bread?”  
The son answered, “From God. I got it from God.”

There are two classes of people in the world: those who take things for granted, and those who take things with gratitude.

Did you know that *grace* and *gratitude* come from the same word root? So do *think* and *thank*. Grateful people have seen the grace of God, and they are not thoughtless people — they are *thankful* people.

### TODAY'S ACTION POINT

Find a household item near you — one that you use on a regular basis. Think about the way it was made, and how you came to have it. Thank God for this seemingly mundane, everyday item that blesses you so much, and for every step of the process that God ordained to give it to you.



## DAY 7 <sup>Real</sup> Thankfulness is Perpetual

### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

“...Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:18b-20).

### TODAY'S THOUGHT

We've seen that true thankfulness is proper for all Christians.

**Second, real thankfulness is perpetual.**

Today's verse says that we are to be giving thanks *always*. It's good that we have one day called Thanksgiving Day. Frankly, it should be upsetting that some call it “Turkey Day.” Our culture is trying to secularize even the idea of giving thanks to God. But as George Washington said, in the first Thanksgiving proclamation, “It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor.”

But we're not supposed to do it just one day a year. One day is not long enough to thank God for all that He's given us!

If we only give thanks one day a year, we're apt to forget His blessings. They come daily! “Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits, the God of our salvation!” (Psalm 68:19). “Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:22-23). Every day, God has brand-new blessings for you.

We are to be giving thanks *always*. Every prayer that you pray ought to be salted with thanks. The Apostle Paul gave us a recipe for not worrying: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6). Don't ever pray without thanking God. That's what Paul said: don't worry about anything, and pray about everything — but when you pray, be sure to do it with thanksgiving.

We need to pull some of the groans out of our prayers and shove in more thanks. Thank God in *everything!*

### TODAY'S ACTION POINT

A life of perpetual thankfulness won't happen on its own. Be intentional about your good intentions! Be a thankful Christian; not a Christian who knows they're supposed to be thankful. With the Holy Spirit working in you, you can.

How can you be more thankful today than you were yesterday? Journal your thoughts.



## DAY 8 <sup>Real</sup> Thankfulness is Pervasive

### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-19).

“I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:12-13).

### TODAY'S THOUGHT

For all Christians, giving thanks is first, proper and second, perpetual.

**Third, real thankfulness is pervasive.**

Be thankful for **spiritual things**. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says to give thanks *through Jesus Christ*. Christ is the one we give thanks through, and the one we give thanks for. Say with the apostle Paul, “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:15)

Be thankful for **simple things**. Most of us are thankful for health, food, etc. But are you thankful for your glass of water? India is the second most populated nation, yet 75% of India’s water is not fit to drink. In America, we just turn on the tap and take it for granted. So next time you thank God for the food, why don’t you thank Him for the water?

Be thankful for **sorrowful things**. We’re to be “giving thanks always for all things” (Ephesians 5:20a). Now, are you supposed to thank God for cancer, divorce, war, blasphemy? No. God has set Himself against these bad things. So what does this mean? Romans 8:28 explains — “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.” The thing itself isn’t good, but God is working all things together for good. The word *providence* literally means “to see ahead” — God sees ahead and turns bad into good, for our good and His glory.

The Bible ranks murmuring with idolatry. Nothing shows more lack of faith than complaining... And nothing shows your faith in God’s sovereignty more than simply thanking Him.

### TODAY'S ACTION POINT

You may want to say, “I don’t feel like thanking Him.” But that has nothing to do with it. Don’t thank Him by feeling; thank Him by faith.

Feelings are deceptive. But the Bible is the Word of God, and nothing else is worth believing.



## DAY 9 <sup>Real</sup> Thankfulness is Pleasurable

### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the LORD.' Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem! Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together, where the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to the Testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD" (Psalm 122:1-4).

### TODAY'S THOUGHT

As we've been studying, true thanksgiving is proper, perpetual and pervasive. And when it is those three things, we see that:

#### **Fourth, real thankfulness is pleasurable.**

"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always..." (Ephesians 5:18-20a)

Do you see how the Lord links praise, joy and thankfulness together? Do you see how a singing heart and praising lips are inseparably wed? Thankful people are happy people. Unthankful people are unhappy people.

You may say, "If I had something to be thankful for, I'd be happy." But you've forgotten — you do have something to be thankful for. You have life. You have Christ. You might say, "But my circumstance aren't good!" Who wrote Ephesians? Paul. Where was he when he wrote it? In prison.

Right now, you may be looking forward to seeing family for Thanksgiving. But when Paul wrote this verse in Ephesians, he wasn't expecting his friends for a feast. He was in some vermin-filled prison, lonely, singing and making melody in his heart to the Lord, giving thanks always. Do you know when we started celebrating Thanksgiving in America? When people were thanking God for survival. They were still alive, and there was something to eat.

The more people have, the less they tend to be grateful. Isn't that ironic? With the blessings we have in America, it would be harder to get a National Day of Thanksgiving than it was back yonder.

The book of Ephesians shows us the Apostle Paul in prison, rejoicing in the Lord. Gratefulness turned his prison into a palace. And ungratefulness can turn your palace into a prison.

### TODAY'S ACTION POINT

Does thankfulness sound more like a chore to you than a rewarding, pleasurable activity? Remember: unless you believe that thankfulness is proper — that it's part of your duty to God — and make a habit of giving thanks at all times, for everything, you cannot expect it to be rewarding. Journal your thoughts.



# DAY 10 <sup>Real</sup> Thankfulness is Possible

## TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

"Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:17-21).

## TODAY'S THOUGHT

We've identified four things that real thankfulness is: it's proper, perpetual, pervasive, and pleasurable.

### Fifth, real thankfulness is possible!

Ephesians 5:18 says, "be filled with the Spirit." Then verse 20 says, "be giving thanks." Thankfulness is not a natural human way to live. Gratitude is a grace from God. The Holy Spirit is the substance of our thankfulness, the source of it, and the strength of it.

Do you know how to be filled with the Spirit?

First of all, **receive Christ** as your personal Savior and Lord. No one can be filled with the Spirit without Christ. "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Romans 8:9). An unsaved man cannot practice what Ephesians 5:20 teaches.

Second, say, "**Lord**, I desire You to **have complete control** over my life. Holy Spirit, you live in me as resident — now rule as president." Joy will bubble up in you, and you'll start "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19). Everything will take on a different hue. You'll be giving God praise and thanks always, for all things, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ — because you'll be filled with the Spirit.

Whether you're in prison—as Paul was when he wrote Ephesians — or sitting down to Thanksgiving dinner, you'll be praising God. Bitterness, fear, self-pity, ungratefulness and negativism will go out of your life if you practice the grace of gratitude.

And *it is possible*, when you let the Holy Spirit fill you.

## TODAY'S ACTION POINT

All this depends on *the Holy Spirit* in you. We are not capable of pleasing God until the Spirit makes us able. Don't walk away from today's challenge still determined to trust your own willpower to be more thankful. "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may have an abundance for every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8). Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a thankful heart.



## DAY 11 *Show Thankfulness* by Offering Your Person

We started this thanksgiving challenge by identifying five things that all Christians have to thank God for — His providence, perception, purpose, patience, and presence. Next, we discussed five characteristics of real thankfulness — it is proper, perpetual, pervasive, pleasurable and possible.

For our final five days, we're going to take these more abstract thoughts and put them in working clothes. We'll answer our third question: **"Where do I show thankfulness in my life?"**

### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

**"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God"** (Romans 12:1-2).

### TODAY'S THOUGHT

We recognize that we do have many reasons to give thanks to God, and we see that real thankfulness pervades all of life. But talk is cheap! We need to turn thanks-giving into thanks-living. "Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing" (Psalm 107:22). How do you offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving?

**First, show thankfulness by offering your person.**

Paul says, **"I beseech you therefore, brethren..."** (Romans 12:1a). It's as if he's on his knees. And who was speaking through Paul? God was. If Jesus were to look up in your face and say, "I beg you to do this," would you do it? That's what He's doing in Romans 12:1 — the Lord is beseeching you.

And here's the reason: **"By the mercies of God"** (Romans 12:1b). Why should you give your body to Him? Because He gave His body for you. Drops of grief can never repay the debt of love.

You must present yourself as a living sacrifice to the Lord:

- **Voluntarily.** See the words, **"you present..."**? (See Romans 12:1.) That's the word for a man joining an army voluntarily. Paul is talking about a volunteer.
- **Completely.** You have to die to your old ways. Your spouse, children, home, car, vacation, future, bank account, ambitions — they all belong to the Lord.

For the Old Testament sacrifices, the Bible says, **"bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar."** (See Psalm 118:27.) Do you know why the sacrifice was bound? Because it tended to slide off.

### TODAY'S ACTION POINT

Have you ever made a commitment to the Lord and then slid off the altar? The Old Testament priest used two hooks to hold the sacrifice on the altar. Here are two hooks to keep you bound to the altar:

1. Devotion.
2. Discipline.

One is not a substitute for the other, but together they will keep you bound to the altar as a living sacrifice to the Lord. Write down what it looks like for you to become a living sacrifice — to be devoted to the Lord and disciplined in that devotion.



DAY 12 *Show*  
*Thankfulness*  
by  
Offering Praise

**TODAY'S SCRIPTURE**

“Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God” (Psalm 50:23).

**TODAY'S THOUGHT**

Yesterday we found the first way to offer the “sacrifices of thankfulness” (See Psalm 107:22.) — by offering your person to God.

**Second, show thankfulness by offering your praise.**

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name” (Hebrews 13:15). Have you ever thought of your praise as a sacrifice?

Your praise is of more value to God than whatever you put in the offering plate — if it's *genuine* praise. “I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the LORD better than an ox or bull, which has horns and hooves” (Psalm 69:30-31). Do you know how much an ox was worth in Old Testament days? This would be like saying, “I'm going to give God my luxury car.” But God says here that your praise of thanksgiving will please Him more than your material gifts.

**“...Let us continually offer...”** (See Hebrews 13:15.) You don't go to church to praise the Lord. You're supposed to bring your praise *with* you. You *continue* your praise in church. The reason some of us do a poor job of praising God corporately is that we have not been praising Him privately. “I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth” (Psalm 34:1).

“Accept, I pray, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me Your judgments” (Psalm 119:108). *The freewill offerings* of my mouth. God help us to offer the sacrifice of praise!

**TODAY'S ACTION POINT**

God's people were always meant to be a musical people. Nobody should have to beg you to sing. No wonder hymn-writer Isaac Watts wrote, “*Let those refuse to sing that never knew our God.*” No Christian is excused — we must all sing praises to God.

How can singing praise become a regular part of your family's life? Pick a hymn or Scripture and sing a praise to Him now.



## DAY 13 <sup>Show</sup> Thankfulness in Prayer

### TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

“Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” (Revelation 5:8).

### TODAY'S THOUGHT

We've discovered two ways for us to offer the “sacrifices of thankfulness” (See Psalm 107:22.): by offering your person and your praise.

#### Third, show thankfulness by offering your prayer.

Your prayer is to be like two things: “Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice” (Psalm 141:2). Incense is perfume, but in order for that perfume to be released, it has to be burned. As it burns, the aroma goes up in smoke. Today's verse tells us that the *prayers of the saints* are incense.

If you were to walk into the Old Testament tabernacle, you would come to an altar. There was fire on it, but the high priest did not light it — it had to be kindled from Heaven. This altar was in front of a curtain, and behind that was the Holy of Holies. The priest came in morning and evening to offer incense on the altar.

Our aim is to get into the Holy of Holies, where we have communion with God. But you cannot come in unless you come to the altar of incense — which is *prayer*.

Don't offer prayer that is not based on the blood of Jesus Christ. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear” (Psalm 66:18). You have no basis to come to God, except by Christ. But when you come by Christ's blood and offer prayer like sweet perfume, the Bible calls that a sacrifice.

### TODAY'S ACTION POINT

According to Revelation 1:4-6, you are a priest. Did you offer incense this morning? Morning and evening, the Old Testament priests would go into the tabernacle to offer incense. Have *you* offered the sacrifice of prayer? Do so now and do so every day.



DAY 14 Show  
*Thankfulness*  
with  
Your Possessions

**TODAY'S SCRIPTURE**

“Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the first-fruits of all your increase” (Proverbs 3:9).

**TODAY'S THOUGHT**

We've already found three ways to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving in our lives: by offering our person, praise, and prayer.

**Fourth, show thankfulness by offering your possessions.**

Don't think that because something is spiritual, it has to be immaterial. “But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Hebrews 13:16). When we give, it is to be a spiritual sacrifice. When Paul received a missionary gift from the church at Philippi, he wrote that their gift was “a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God” (Philippians 4:18b).

If you want to show your *thanksgiving*, show it in your *giving*. Your giving shows what you think of God. Some folks come and give God the crumbs. Don't wait to see if there's anything left for God. God doesn't want “a place” in your life. He doesn't want a promise. He demands *pre-eminence*.

“And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?” says the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 1:8).

We don't give to the Church because the Church needs it. We don't give to a cause. Our giving is a sacrifice to God. If there were not a need in this world, if we took our gift to God and burned it up, it would still be a blessing just to come and give it. That's what they did with the Old Testament sacrifices: they burned them. It was simply a sacrifice to our great God, “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

**TODAY'S ACTION POINT**

Mentally examine where your money goes. Are you giving God from the first-fruits, or from the leftovers? Are you content to give God the bare minimum? Read Mark 12:41-44 and ask yourself which of Jesus' categories you fall into. Journal your thoughts.



DAY 15 <sup>Show</sup> *Thankfulness*  
with Purity

**TODAY'S SCRIPTURE**

“Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully” (Psalm 24:3-4).

**TODAY'S THOUGHT**

We've identified four ways to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving in our lives: by offering our person, praise, prayer and possessions.

**Fifth, show thankfulness by offering your purity.**

All of these sacrifices of thanksgiving are based on what God has done for us.

“We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:9).

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart — these, O God, You will not despise” (Psalm 51:17). Have you given that sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit? And why are we calling this the sacrifice of *purity*?

David wrote Psalm 51 because he had sinned. What led David to a broken and contrite spirit? Not David's badness, but God's goodness. “...The goodness of God leads you to repentance” (Romans 2:4b). How can we sin against one who suffered, bled and died for us? If you say you love Him, then get rid of the sin that breaks His heart.

Some Sundays, we act like we've done God a favor by coming to church — haughty, unbent, unbroken. We ought to bow down before our great God and say, “Oh God, in brokenness and humility, I offer tears of repentance and purity of life before you, and my sacrifice of thanksgiving. Dear God, there will be no unconfessed sin in my life.”

**TODAY'S ACTION POINT**

Confession ought to be a daily exercise for the Christian. We cannot harbor sin in our hearts and expect to feel “close” to God. Pray this passage now, and make it your daily request: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139:22-24).



## SUMMARY

Over the last 15 days, we've been challenged by three questions:

- “What have I got to be thankful for?”

We answered this with five sure things that every Christian has, and ought to thank God for: His **providence**, His **perception**, His **purpose**, His **patience**, and His **presence**.

- “What is real thankfulness?”

Real, heartfelt thankfulness is, first of all, **proper**, and it will be **perpetual, pervasive**, and **pleasurable** — and because of the Holy Spirit's work in you, it is **possible!**

- “Where do I show thankfulness in my life?”

It's one thing to talk about our duty to show thankfulness, but we prove our thankfulness by offering to God what is His: our **person, praise, prayer, possessions**, and **purity**.